MAUNDY THURSDAY

Selections of the Biblical Text

arranged for the Stage

By Mortimer Desrouleaux

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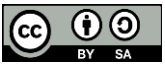

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Sources

All scriptural texts arranged in this work are taken from the World English Bible with minimal adaptation, such as modifying for dialogue, the substitution of names for pronouns, adjustments to tense, wording, and punctuation for clarity, the substitution of THE LORD for the proper name "Yahweh", and the shortening, re-ordering, or intermixing of texts.

This arrangement does not purport to harmonize the chronology in the gospels of events at the last supper or to accurately reflect the chronological ordering of historical events. Instead, fragments are arranged to highlight four key events on Maundy Thursday: the washing of feet, the betrayal, the giving of the new commandment, and the new covenant along with the institution of the Lord's Supper.

The dramatic instructions provided are interpretive and may be discarded or revised as desired.

The texts used, in order, are: Exodus 24:7-11; Jeremiah 31:31, 33-34; John 13:1-10; Luke 22:25-27; John 13:12-30; Matthew 26:22,24-25; John 13:31-48, Luke 22:31-34; John 14:1-27; Psalm 136:23-26; Luke 22:15-20; John 14:28-31

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CHARACTERS

NARR 1 & NARR 2	First and Second Narrators, opening only.
NARR 3	Third Narrator, primary narrator.
JESUS	Jesus of Nazareth, at the time of the Last Supper.
PETER	The disciple Simon Peter.
JUDAS	The disciple Judas Iscariot.
JOHN	John, the disciple whom Jesus loved.
PHILIP	Philip, the disciple.
THOMAS	Thomas, the disciple.
JUDE	Jude, the disciple.

Other DISCIPLES may or may not be added.

SETTING

The upper room. A table is arranged and set for the Passover feast.

TIME

Thursday evening, before the death of Jesus.

SCENES

Prologue

Scene 1	The Washing
Scene 2	The Betrayal
Scene 3	The Commandment
Scene 4	The Supper

MAUNDY THURSDAY

PROLOGUE

(Narrators speak from a space away from the upper room)

NARR 1

Moses took the book of the covenant and read it in the hearing of the people, and they said, "We will do all that THE LORD has said, and be obedient." Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, "Look, this is the blood of the covenant, which THE LORD has made with you concerning all these words." Then Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel went up. They saw the God of Israel. Under his feet was like a paved work of sapphire stone, like the skies for clearness. He didn't lay his hand on the nobles of the children of Israel. They saw God, and ate and drank.

NARR 2

"Behold, the days are coming," says THE LORD, "that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah. "I will put my law in their inward parts, and I will write it in their heart. I will be their God, and they shall be my people. They will no longer each teach his neighbor, and every man teach his brother, saying, 'Know THE LORD;' for they will all know me, from their least to their greatest," says THE LORD, "for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."

NARR *3*

It was the feast of the Passover. Jesus knew that his time had come that he would depart from this world to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, now he loved them to the end.

SCENE 1 – THE WASHING

(The Upper Room)

(DISCPLES and JESUS enter)

(As NARR 3 reads, JESUS lays aside his outer garments, puts a towel around his waist, and pours water into a basin.)

NARR *3*

Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he came from God and was going to God, arose from supper, and laid aside his outer garments. He took a towel and wrapped a towel around his waist. Then he poured water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him. He came to Simon
Peter.

(JESUS motions for PETER to join him)

PETER

Lord, are *you* going to wash *my* feet?

JESUS

You don't know what I am doing now, but you will understand later.

PETER

No, you will never wash my feet!

JESUS

If I don't wash you, you have no part with me.

PETER

Then, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head!

JESUS

Someone who has bathed only needs to have his feet washed; he is completely clean. And you are clean… but not all of you.

(JUDAS shifts uncomfortably in his seat)

JESUS

The kings of the nations lord it over them, and those who have authority over them are called 'benefactors.' But not so with you. Rather, the one who is greater among you, let him become as the younger, and one who is governing, as one who serves. For who is greater, one who sits at the table, or one who serves? Isn't it he who sits at the table? But I am among you as one who serves.

(Musical interlude as JESUS washes one by one the feet of the other DISCIPLES, ending with JUDAS)

SCENE 2 – THE BETRAYAL

(The Upper Room)

(Musical interlude ends. JESUS puts on his outer garments again, and sits at the head of the table. JOHN sits beside him, leaning on him)

JESUS

Do you know what I have done to you? You call me, 'Teacher' and 'Lord.' You say so correctly, for so I am. If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you should also do as I have done to you. Most certainly I tell you, a servant is not greater than his lord, neither is one who is sent greater than he who

sent him. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.

I don't speak concerning all of you. I know whom I have chosen. But this is that the Scripture may be fulfilled, 'He who eats bread with me has lifted up his heel against me.'

(Troubled). Most certainly, I tell you that one of you is going to betray me.

JUDE

(Sadly) It isn't me, is it, Lord?

PHILIP

(In Disbelief) It isn't me, is it, Lord?

JOHN

(Grieved) It isn't me, is it, Lord?

PETER

(*Certain*) It isn't me, is it, Lord?

THOMAS

(Sincerely Wondering) It isn't me, is it, Lord?

JUDAS

(Laughing) It isn't me, is it, Lord?

JESUS

The Son of Man will go even as it is written of him, but woe to that man through whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would be better for that man if he had not been born.

(PETER motions for JOHN and whispers to him)

PETER

(Whispering) Ask him which one he means.

JOHN

Lord, who is it?

JESUS

(To JOHN) It is he to whom I will give this piece of bread when I have dipped it.

(JESUS dips the bread and gives it to JUDAS)

JUDAS

(Quietly, in denial, directly to Jesus only)

It isn't me, is it, Rabbi?

JESUS

You said it. What you do, do quickly.

(JUDAS leaves through the back door. The disciples are confused. Musical interlude.)

SCENE 3 – THE COMMANDMENT

(The DISCIPLES eat and listen intently)

JESUS

Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself, and he will glorify him immediately.

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.

Little children, I will be with you a little while longer. You will seek me, but Where I am going, you can't come.

PETER

Lord, where are you going?

JESUS

Where I am going, you can't follow now, but you will follow afterwards.

PETER

Lord, why can't I follow you now? *I will lay down my life for you!*

JESUS

Will you lay down your life for me? . . . Simon, Simon, behold, Satan asked to have all of you, that he might sift you as wheat. But I prayed for you, that your faith wouldn't fail. You, when once you have turned again, establish your brothers.

PETER

Lord, I am ready to go with you both to prison and to death!"

JESUS

I tell you, Peter, the rooster will by no means crow today until you deny that you know me three times.

(The DISCIPLES including PETER are troubled)

JESUS

Don't let your heart be troubled. Believe in God. Believe also in me.

In my Father's house are many homes. If it weren't so, I would have told you. I am going to prepare a place for you. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will receive you to myself; that where I am, you may be there also.

You know where I go, and you know the way.

THOMAS

Lord, we don't know where you are going. How can we know the way?

JESUS

I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the father except through me. If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on, you know him and have seen him.

PHILIP

Lord, show us the Father, and that will be enough for us.

JESUS

Have I been with you such a long time, and do you not know me, Philip? *Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father*. How do you say, 'Show us the Father?' Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I tell you, I speak not from myself; but the Father who lives in me does his works.

I will pray to the Father, and he will give you another Counselor, that he may be with you forever: the Spirit of truth, whom the world can't receive, for it doesn't see him and doesn't know him. You know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you orphans. I will come to you.

One who has my commandments and keeps them, that person is one who loves me. One who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him, and will reveal myself to him.

Yet a little while, and the world will see me no more; but you will see me. Because I live, you will live also. In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.

JUDE

Lord, what has happened that you are about to reveal yourself to us, and not to the world?

JESUS

If a man loves me, he will keep my word. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.

He who doesn't love me doesn't keep my words. The word which you hear isn't mine, but the Father's who sent me.

I have said these things to you while still living with you. But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things, and will remind you of all that I said to you.

Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you; not as the world gives, I give to you. Don't let your heart be troubled, neither let it be fearful.

If you love me, keep my commandments.

Love one another.

(Musical interlude)

SCENE 4: THE SUPPER

JESUS

He remembered us in our low estate

DISCIPLES

His love endures forever.

JESUS

And freed us from our enemies.

DISCIPLES

His love endures forever.

JESUS

He gives food to every creature.

DISCIPLES

His love endures forever.

JESUS

Give thanks to the God of heaven.

DISCIPLES

His love endures forever.

JESUS

I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. For I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God.

(JESUS breaks the bread and passes it)

JESUS

This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in memory of me.

(The DISCIPLES eat. JESUS takes the cup)

This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.

Take this and share it among yourselves, for I tell you, I will not drink at all again from the fruit of the vine until God's Kingdom comes.

(The DISCIPLES drink)

You heard how I told you, 'I am going away, and I will come back to you.' If you loved me, you would have rejoiced because I said 'I am going to my Father;' for the Father is greater than I. Now I have told you before it happens so that when it happens, you may believe. I will no more speak much with you, for the prince of the world comes, and he has nothing in me. But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father commanded me, even so I do.

Arise, let's go from here.

(Musical finale as ALL exit)